

# Downsizing

## A HOME DOESN'T HAVE TO BE OVERWHELMING

*Downsizing is a rite of passage that many older adults greet with a mix of relief and dread. However, the stresses of downsizing can go much easier with a little preparation and the right resources.*

Here are some suggestions:

### Make the Decision of What to Keep

*One of the biggest challenges facing older adults who are downsizing is what to do with all of their belongings.*

- Take a good look at your belongings and really decide which items mean the most.
- When you walk into your new home, you will want it to feel like home, so plan to surround yourself with only the furniture and memorabilia that you absolutely love and pare your list back from there.
- If there are possessions you value, but are not ready to part with, put them into storage for awhile to see if you miss them. The things you thought were important may no longer seem so after time, but it's good to have that option.

### Hold a "Giving Away" Party

*Your treasures are important to you, so make sure those you eliminate go to good "homes."*

- After you make the decision about what you won't be taking, have a "Giving Away" party and ask family and friends to identify items they'd like to have. You'll feel better knowing that your treasures have been passed along to the people you love. From there, it's easier to part with the rest.

## Decide on Donation or Disposal of Things That Are Still Useable

*In the process of downsizing, you will inevitably come up with items you no longer want, but are still in working order. It can be especially difficult to know what to do with these items.*

- Find a service that assists people with disposing of home contents during a life transition (Older computers, televisions and VCRs often fall into this category) such as Dutiful Daughter in Manchester. They will also bring non-working or outdated items to transfer stations and dumps.
- Try to match the better quality items with non-profit organizations. Many will come and pick-up these items.

## Handling the Physical Strain

*Downsizing is hard physical work and doing the heavy lifting is often the most challenging obstacle for older adults attempting it.*

- Locate a company that can take care of dump runs, deliver furniture to relatives or storage bins, organize tag and estate sales and even clean up the house and perform minor repairs afterwards. Dutiful Daughters can also provide this service.
- Secure a moving company that will also do more than the traditional move from house to house. Some movers deliver furniture to the new home, as well as items to the home of family members in another location. They can also assist with unpacking. Duncaster has used Woodland Movers and Warehouse in Hartford for this service.

## Dealing with the Valuables

*Since some long-time homeowners have accumulated collectibles and heirlooms that may be worth considerable money, disposing of them in an appropriate matter is another part of downsizing.*

- Obtain an appraisal on these items from a reputable antiques dealer who can help sell or auction them for a commission. Some appraisers even travel to homes to look at items that people want to sell.
- Consider the Internet as a selling vehicle; the web has expanded the capacity for those interested in buying and selling antiques and collectibles. The buyer also pays the shipping.

For more information, visit [www.duncaster.org](http://www.duncaster.org).